




Speech By
Hon. Shannon Fentiman

MEMBER FOR WATERFORD

Record of Proceedings, 15 June 2023

**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL; REVENUE
LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women) (2.16 pm): I begin my contribution by apologising to the school students who are here to see our democracy in action for that shameful yelling contribution from the member for Kawana. It is so lovely to see you. I am so happy to talk about our record health budget which is providing world-class health care to Queenslanders closer to home. As I have travelled across the state, I have met with so many amazing frontline healthcare workers who are caring for Queenslanders every day. When Queenslanders needed them most during the pandemic, our frontline health workers stepped up—and to them I want to say a very big thank you.

Before I discuss how our budget will support these amazing staff, I want to acknowledge how bereft of ideas the Leader of the Opposition is. His two new policies today to complement his existing meaningless slogans about health were to reform health data and to create a workforce strategy. Clearly, he has not been paying attention because I have already committed to strengthening how our health data is released, including to make it more transparent and easier for Queenslanders to understand. This is notwithstanding the fact that we already release hundreds of points of data every quarter.

On workforce strategy, I am sorry to say to the Leader of the Opposition that we are already doing that. We are already well underway in developing a key workforce strategy. I have already met in the last few weeks with the AMA, the RDAQ, the QNMU and other health unions about this strategy. I am very pleased to inform the House that key consultation with health consumers and frontline workers will begin in coming months. These were his two big, bold ideas for health and we are already doing them.

He also talked about mental health. We know that he criticised our mental health levy, so my question today to the Leader of the Opposition is this: will he guarantee to keep the mental health levy? Will he guarantee that they will not scrap it in government? Because this is about sustainably funding the care that Queenslanders need.

Mr Mander interjected.

Ms FENTIMAN: It is not hard to say that you will not cut it, member for Everton—just be very up-front. I also think it is really interesting that the Leader of the Opposition in his speech talked about women, the superannuation gap and the wages gap, but did he have one idea about what to do about it? Did he welcome our \$16 million investment around getting women back into the workforce? Absolutely not. Do you know what would probably help the superannuation gap and the pay gap? Get some more women on your side of the House. That would make a difference to the superannuation gap. The Leader of the Opposition also talked about ramping. Well, hello! That is why we have an incredible plan, Putting Patients First, which involves \$760 million to tackle ambulance ramping.

Mr Hart: What are you doing? Building bigger ramps?

Ms FENTIMAN: You know what we are doing? We are doing what the doctors that I have spoken to in the last few weeks have told us will help. That is about keeping Queenslanders out of hospital in the first place—hospital in the home—

Mr Hart: In the last couple of weeks!

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Lui): Member for Burleigh, you are now warned under the standing orders.

Ms FENTIMAN: It is about investing in our satellite hospitals which will mean people can access health care closer to home and not have to go to the ED. It includes strengthening the Queensland Ambulance Service with more ambos and more trucks on the road. This is how we actually reduce pressure from our emergency departments. Queensland is one of the most decentralised states which is why we have \$70 million over four years to increase the Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme. I know so many members have lobbied to increase the support to enable financially vulnerable Queenslanders to seek the clinical care they need. We have \$42 million for rural and regional birthing services, and I was so pleased to join the Acting Speaker in that announcement, and of course \$586 million for LifeFlight so that when Queenslanders need care at their most vulnerable, no matter where they are, they can get it.

As I said, at the heart of our system is workforce. Our Workforce Attraction Incentive Scheme will provide interstate health practitioners \$20,000 to move to Queensland and up to \$70,000 if they go to regional Queensland. We have had close to 1,000 inquiries. We are also supporting our student nurses and midwives when they have to travel for their placements, which is fantastic. It is a \$22 million investment to provide a cost-of-living allowance for final-year nursing and midwifery students.

I do want to touch on how much we are delivering in my community of Waterford: more than \$1 billion to continue stage 1 and stage 2 expansions, delivering well over 300 beds. There is also \$2.3 million for the new clinical skills laboratory for Loganlea TAFE, meaning better facilities and more courses. There is also \$1 million for new classrooms at Loganlea State High School, one of our growing schools.

The Acting Speaker has reviewed and approved my budget speech for incorporation and, as such, I ask that the remainder of my speech be incorporated into the *Record of Proceedings*.

The speech read as follows—

Infrastructure

In last year's budget, we delivered a significant investment of \$9.785 billion to increase bed capacity across the State, which included three new hospitals, 11 major hospital expansions and a new cancer centre. This is the biggest health build in Queensland's history. And the biggest health infrastructure agenda of any state or territory in Australia. In this budget, Queensland Health will continue delivery of this ambitious program, which has now awarded more than \$3 billion of contracts to deliver expansions in Brisbane, Ipswich, Mackay, Logan, Townsville and Cairns. This budget includes \$150 million for a new mental health facility at the Redland Hospital, which will more than double mental health capacity.

Mental Health

We are boosting mental health care to the tune of \$301.4 million, which will assist in implementing the \$1.645 billion Better Care Together: A plan for Queensland's state-funded mental health, alcohol and other drug services to 2027. We are continuing to explore opportunities to expand mental health and police co-responder models, so that vulnerable people experiencing a crisis can be assessed in their own home de-escalating issues before they become tragedies.

Women's Health

This year's budget also includes almost \$35 million for initiatives that are aimed at boosting women's health care in this state. We want to support Queensland women to thrive and succeed in a gender equal state.

In addition to the \$42M that I mentioned earlier to support rural maternity services we are providing an additional \$13.7 million will support the Growing Deadly Families Strategy so that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander babies born within Queensland have a strong start to life.

The health and wellbeing of sexual assault victims and survivors is paramount. That's why this budget includes \$1.73 million to implement activities that will ensure the integrated, timely and local delivery of high quality, trauma-sensitive forensic medical examinations to victims of sexual assault across Queensland, as part of this government's response to the Hear Her Voice 2 Report.

Health staff are often the first point of contact for people experiencing domestic and family violence. Health workers and clinicians play an essential role in keeping victims and their children safe, as well as helping to hold people who use violence against their own families to account. That is why we are employing more specialist clinicians to train frontline health staff as part of a multimillion-dollar investment.

We are investing an additional \$4.4 million into the program in 2023-24 to increase the number of Full-Time Equivalent DFV clinicians from 13 to 33, with recurrent funding of \$5.7 million committed each year thereafter to support the program.

This state budget investment will prioritise the delivery of trauma-sensitive domestic and family violence training to the frontline health workforce, providing them with the tools they need to make a difference.

Women's economic security

The budget papers released today include an expanded Women's Economic Statement outlining this investment by the Palaszczuk government. Recognising that economic security is the foundation on which women and girls can build prosperous lives, \$16.3 million will be invested in a range of initiatives to strengthen women's economic security.

This includes:

- \$4.6 million over two years for the Women in Trade Apprenticeships Mentoring program, to support women undertaking apprenticeships and improve completion rates.
- \$3.2 million over two years to support a Future Women—Jobs Academy program to train, support and connect up to 500 unemployed and underemployed Queensland women with paid employment and training programs.
- \$2.8 million over four years for the Women in Network grant program to support women and girls' participation and leadership in male-dominated industries
- \$533,000 in 2023-24 for the Fresh Start For Me program to establish online resources to support women impacted by domestic and family violence to return to, or enter, the workforce.
- An additional \$5 million over three years to expand delivery of the Backing Female Founders program, launching a raft of initiatives for women entrepreneurs in innovation-driven enterprises.

These initiatives are on top of our ongoing commitment and investment in Back to Work and Skilling Queenslanders for Work programs. We know that Queensland women have immense skills and talents to contribute to the growth of our Queensland economy. Only by investing in these programs can we break down the structural barriers that still exist and ensure women can live successful lives in an economically inclusive Queensland. This includes ensuring that women can participate in the workforce, and I am pleased the Palaszczuk Government is investing \$645 million investment in free kindy will dramatically assist many Queensland families with cost of living.

Conclusion

All Queenslanders deserve access to economic opportunities and a world class health care system that provides quality care closer to home. And Only a Palaszczuk Labor Government can deliver better outcomes for all Queenslanders. I commend the bill to the House.